

SYLLABUS

AMERICAN PRESIDENCY  
(Gov't 217)

Wesleyan University

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Office Hours: 1/2 hour before and after class  
and by appointment

SPRING 2007

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course has three aims: to survey the institutional development and current operation of the presidency; to examine the politics of presidential leadership, including the processes of selection of governance; and to consider the interaction between the two. Topics to be addressed include the constitutional framework; Federalist-anti-Federalist debate (and the historical extension of that debate), especially the American ambivalence toward executive power; historical development of the office and its relation to party systems; the process of nominating and electing the president; and the relationship of the office to the other branches. We will also explore two additional concepts, executive direct action and the impact of scandal on presidential power and leadership.

**REQUIRED TEXT:** Ellis, Richard J. and Michael Nelson ed. 2006. Debating the Presidency: Conflicting Perspectives on the American Executive. CQ Press (ISBN: 1568029144) Excellent Pro/Con of ongoing scholarly debates.

Gregg, Gary L. 2005. Thinking About the Presidency: Documents and Essays from the Founding to the Present. Rowman & Littlefield (ISBN: 0742543374) Primary source material with analysis that we will use as our core text.

Kelley, Christopher. 2006. Executing the Constitution: Putting the President Back into the Constitution. State University of New York Press (ISBN: 0791487279) Excellent book from a new scholar focusing on the increasing creativity of presidential use of the vagueness of the Constitution.

Rudalevige, Andrew. 2006. The New Imperial Presidency: Renewing Presidential Power after Watergate. Univ. of Michigan Press (ISBN: 0472031929) Another new presidential scholar expanding on and challenging his mentor's 1973 theme of presidential imperialism. Compare this work to that of Kelley's.

Journals: Presidential Studies Quarterly; Congress and the President; Journal of Politics.  
Websites: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov); [www.nara.gov/nara/president/address.html](http://www.nara.gov/nara/president/address.html);  
[www.americanpresidents.org](http://www.americanpresidents.org); any of the presidential library websites.

**OBJECTIVES:** Among the topics we will focus on are: election campaigns, including controversial election returns (especially the 2000 & 2006 elections); highlights of administrations; strengths and weaknesses of the candidates; personal characteristics of the men who held the office; relationships with Congress and the Courts; key domestic and foreign issues as well as current trends; and various models for studying the president/presidency. Additionally, as this is a political science course, we will evaluate the success/failure of a presidency and deal with the "low-N" problem of statistical analyses. In light of two significant recent events (2006 election and the death of the 38<sup>th</sup> president) we will also look at the significance of midterm elections (with no incumbent running) and the ever important pursuit of presidential legacy.

**COMMENTARY:** Over the last decade or so there have been numerous studies/analyses on the presidency as well as individual presidents and their actions while in office. Even out of office presidents remain our focus – witness Carter’s global work on elections; Clinton and Bush I called back into service for the Indonesian tsunami recovery effort; and the importance of modern presidential libraries as centers of political analysis. While in office, presidents pose a challenge to democracy with some scholars going so far as to claim them a danger to the democratic process (Michael Genovese). The president operates in an environment inherently paradoxical. This paradoxical nature of the presidency makes for an elusive subject of study. There were few if any antecedents from which our first president could draw, though there were 14 men who presided over legislative assemblies in an attempt to “form a more perfect union.”

**METHOD OF EVALUATION:**

- Student participation/individual contribution (this is vital for a course of this caliber). Response papers may be assigned as needed.
- A series of short papers (~ 3-5 pages each)
- Research paper (>8 pages) Further information on the paper to be provided.

**GRADING CRITERIA:** Your final grade will be computed as follows:

- Participation 10%
- Attendance 10%
- Short Papers 50%
- Research Paper 30%

A	93-100	C	73-77
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	88-89	D+	68-70
B	83-87	D	63-67
B-	80-83	D-	60-62
C+	78-79	F	Unsatisfactory

**READINGS:** I assign the reading for each class session in the syllabus. Participation and articulation of a position cannot occur without reading the assigned material. To make this class a success, keep up with the readings.

**ATTENDANCE:** The student handbook clearly outlines the attendance policy. If you do not have a copy of the handbook, I strongly recommend you get one. I expect you, the student, to make every effort to attend all classes scheduled.

**DISABILITIES STATEMENT:** If you have a hidden or visible disability which may require classroom or test-taking modifications, please see me as soon as possible.

**MAKE-UP EXAMS:** Are **not** given. This policy also applies to papers and oral presentations. Advance notification and working with me concerning scheduling problems signifies a mark of maturity and responsibility. Remember, you scheduled when the papers are due.

**PERFORMANCE:** How well you perform in class and on examinations is a combination of three factors:

- How well I present the material.
- Your personal motivation to learn. (Notice that I did not mention your capability. You are capable by the mere fact that you are sitting here.)
- Your personal discipline to prepare.

**OVERALL:** I handle the course similar to the job environment. Call me before class and you get a "sick day," call after and I "dock your grade." Talk to me to resolve issues, to solve problems, and to get your questions answered. I am here to help you, let us work together for your academic achievement.

**LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS CLASS IS TO ENJOY IT.**

Your first assignment will be to reread my commentary above and respond to the last line. You are to select one of those fourteen men (5 presided over the Continental Congress and 10 presided over the Congress Assembled - Samuel Huntington was the transition person moving from one to the other. One other man presided over both bodies - John Hancock). Though none of these men had the power associated with the modern president, they were each nonetheless significant. What consideration do we give these men? They are founding fathers! They did bring to the debate their long experience with British executives as well as executives of their respective states. Their two plus decades of experience with government and leadership types not only set the stage for the calling of a convention but more importantly defined and created a national government. It is that government and the creation of the presidency that George Washington accepted in 1789. Your job is to tell me who a particular presiding officer was; what qualifications did he possess to preside; what did he do while presiding officer; how did his actions set the stage for the presidency of George Washington?

Wesleyan  
Presidency  
T/Th

SPRING 2007  
Govt 217  
2:40-4 pm

DEPT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
GARY DONATO  
Rm:

WEEK	TOPIC	READING
1 (1/25)	Introduction and Constitutional Basis Researching the President/Presidency N=1 problem	Article II
2 (1/30, 2/1)	Background: Origins/Power Federalist/Antifederalist Debate <a href="http://www.constitution.org/afp/afp.htm">http://www.constitution.org/afp/afp.htm</a> <a href="http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa00.htm">http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa00.htm</a>	Ellis Ch 1 Gregg Sec 1
<b>Paper #1 Due 2/1: Topic area - historical foundation of the presidency</b>		
3 (2/6,8)	Historical Perspectives 1800-1860 Jefferson/Jackson/Polk	Rudalevige 19-39
4 (2/13,15)	Historical Perspective 1860-1933 Lincoln/Roosevelt/Taft/Wilson	Rudalevige 39-56 Gregg Sec 2
5 (2/20,22)	Historical Perspective 1933-1975 FDR/Truman/Ike/JFK/LBJ/Nixon/Ford	Rudalevige 39-56 Kelley 2,3,5
6 (2/27, 3/1)	The elected individual (President as Head of Party)	Gregg Sec 6 Ellis 2,3 Gregg Reading 34

Note: We will also discuss the electoral college and recommended reforms.

Scholars argue that the president's relationship with the public is a "double-edged sword." What is his relationship with us? Presidents speak more often today than ever before, what are they actually communicating? Should the Electoral College be abolished? What would be the implication of abolishing the College on the way presidents run for office, and more importantly their willingness to communicate with the public? How has the movement toward a more plebiscitary presidency impacted the political ecosystem?

7 (3/8)	The institutional presidency	Ellis 9,10 Gregg Sec 3
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#### SPRING BREAK 3/9-3/26

Think about the following before returning from break:

What constitutes the institutions of the presidency? What are their constitutional significance? What is the impact of including the presidency in presidential analysis on our understanding of the office and the man? What techniques does a president use to control the institutions? What response does this elicit from the other branches of government? How do changes in power and influence over one



(4/24,26)

Note: Relook at the Federalist papers and the Constitution to determine what American democracy requires of the Vice President and First Lady. What will be the implications of the first female president on the role of "first gentleman?" Scholars generally agree that Nixon's vice presidency changed the office. How so? Have we seen the zenith of the vice presidency under Cheney or is the office an institutional necessity? What are our expectations of the "first lady" and are these "fair?"

13	Scandals/Abuse of Power	Ellis 5
(5/1,3)	Impeachment	Gregg Reading 31 Rudalevige (see index) Kelley 11

Hillary Clinton, during the impeachment of her husband, announced that we've entered the era of demolishing the president. Many presidents have scandals associated with their tenure. Can we, as political scientists, use scandal as an effective measure of the president/presidency? Visit the following for an example:  
<http://www.realchange.org>.

14	Evaluating the President	Ellis 11,12
(5/8)		Gregg Sec 8

**Paper #5 Due 5/8: We've seen a significant shift in presidential powers over the course of history. Scholars vacillate as to the extent of presidential authority while we as citizens place the president in ever greater paradoxical situations. Undoubtedly September 11, 2001 was a seminal event in American history. The impact of that event gives more power to the president and effects a challenge to democracy. The 110<sup>th</sup> Congress recognizes and is in a unique position to stem the tide toward an imperial presidency without imperiling him. We need to appreciate the paradoxes of American presidential leadership. In other words we want to have a Hamiltonian "energetic executive" without sacrificing republican liberties. Imagine for me, employing all that you've learned this semester, that president as you advise a candidate to take on the mantle of leadership in 2008.**

5/9-5/13                      Reading and preparation for finals.

**Research Paper Due 5/14. See me early in the semester for your topic.**

## Papers and Examination Information

I constantly evaluate your writing skills as the course develops.

**EXAMS** Examinations are of the "mixed type," combining true/false, multiple choice, short answer (less than a paragraph), longer answer (paragraph), and essay (page to page and a half). Responses other than multiple choice require supporting evidence in the form of citation/quotation using either MLA/APA/Chicago Manual of Style format.

**NOTE: Grading on examinations consists of 50% for the correct answer and 50% for germane supporting evidence.**

**PAPERS** All written material must be typed double-spaced and with 1 ½" left margin, 1" margins top/bottom/right. The writing must comply with MLA standards. I most strongly recommend you acquire a writing guide/handbook. I evaluate the papers for content, grammar, and historical accuracy. The best way to ensure you have a presentable paper is to conduct both spell and grammar check and have at least one peer read your paper, preferably aloud so you can hear your errors. The quality of your papers falls into and between three categories: Superior, Excellent, and Good.

**Superior:** Paper is historically accurate with main ideas supported by facts. The paper has a clear thesis, original/thoughtful interpretation and demonstrates significant knowledge of the topic. This paper also exhibits creative use of wide ranging sources that advance the thesis and analysis. Finally, this paper exhibits a balance between interpretations.

**Excellent:** The main ideas have factual support but can be improved with more evidence. The thesis is present, but not clearly stated. This paper presents more description than analysis. The author uses a variety of sources to support the thesis but provides little analysis of the supporting material. Finally, this paper inordinately selects one position over another with little convincing evidence or analysis.

**Good:** Little evidentiary material to support thesis. The paper has a focus but no clear thesis. The work is essentially non-specific in that there is little analysis and factual material to support a position. Source material is not diverse, too much emphasis on one type of resource. The paper only presents one point of view when it is obvious that others exist.

## SUPREME COURT DECISIONS AFFECTING THE PRESIDENCY

### **Separation of Powers:**

*Marbury v Madison* (1803)  
*Youngstown Sheet & Tube* (1952)  
*INS v Chadha* (1983)  
*Clinton v City of New York* (1998)

### **Elections**

*Buckley v Valeo* (1976)  
*Bush v Gore* (2000)

### **Administrative Powers**

*Myers v United States* (1903)  
*Humphrey's Executor v United States* (1935)  
*Nixon v Fitzgerald* (1982)  
*Mitchell v Forsyth* (1985)  
*Clinton v Jones* (1997)

### **Executive Privilege**

*United States v Nixon* (1974)  
*In re Grand Jury Proceeding* (1998)  
*Cheney et. al. v U. S. District Court* (2004)

### **Congress**

*In Re Neagle* (1890)  
*In re Debs* (1895)  
*Bowsher v Synar* (1986)

### **Domestic Policy**

*NY Times v United States* (1971)  
*United States v United States District Court* (1972)  
*Nixon v Administrator of General Services* (1977)  
*Snepp v United States* (1980)

### **Foreign Policy**

*US v Curtiss Wright Export Corporation* (1936)  
*US v Belmont* (1937)  
*U.S. v Guy W Capps Inc* (1953)  
*Zemel v Rusk* (1965)  
*Goldwater v Carter* (1979)  
*Haig v Agee* (1981)

### **War Powers**

*Bas v Tingy* (1800)  
*Prize Cases* (1863)  
*Ex Parte Milligan* (1866)  
*Korematsu v US* (1944)  
*Mona v McNamara* (1967)  
*Dellums v Bush* (1990)  
*Hamdi. v Rumsfeld* (2004)  
*Rasul v Bush* (2004)  
*Al Odah v U.S.* (2004)